

I am the plough,
Master of Life,
Where my sharp coulter leads
Ceases sterility;
And by my sargasses
Gladdened and satisfied,
Follow the people!

I, in the shimmering dawn,
Furrowing circlewise—
Leaving wide gaps where Death
Swung his black gates anon—
Traced the foundations where
Rose the proud battlements,
Bastions and walls round
The City of Life.

To me for charity
Come the worn mendicants,

Footed it painfully
Out from the darkness
Into the silence—
Here are my arms for you
Poured forth abundantly—
Yours while the earth knows
Summer and winter,
Seed-time and harvest—
Eat and be glad!

Egypt and Nineveh,
Rome and Assyria,
Were but my pensioners;
I am the permanent,
Still stand my kingdoms—
Still wave the cornfields—
Seeming but slave indeed,
Master of Life am I—
I am the plough!

—W. G. Hole, in London Spectator.

The Identity of Diane.

By Muriel Hine.

My bag was already on the hansom, and Brice was handing in my gun case when the telegraph boy ran up the steps.

"For Carrington," he admitted, in answer to my hurried question.

Just a few minutes later, and I might have been saved all the embarrassments of that October afternoon; but, as it was, I tore the envelope open and read:

"Diane coming by 3.30 train; please bring her down.—Augusta."

That is so like my cousin's wife! When the last trump sounds for the last soul to hand in its reckoning, Augusta will have gone back for her lace pocket handkerchief.

So now, at the seventh hour, I was expected to rise to the situation and act as cicerone to a total stranger. For who on earth was "Diane"? That was the question that tortured me as my hansom carried me all too quickly to our trying place.

I remembered vaguely that when Augusta married my cousin, Stanfield Fane, there was a talk of French connections; of a niece from Perigord to join the bridesmaid's ranks; of a dash of French blood that drove Augusta recklessly to Paquin for her wedding gown, amply atoned for by the stiff magnificence of her fine English presence.

For to lay to Augusta's charge any Gallic frivolity would be to stretch one's imagination to snapping point!

I was still immersed in the problem of Diane's identity when my hansom pulled up at Paddington. There Fortune played into my hand, for as I stood waiting for my turn at the ticket office I heard a lady's voice, with the unmistakable throaty "r" of the Parisian, demand a "first class" for Wryborough.

The station was dark; but as she turned her head I caught a glimpse of a dainty reticulated profile under the smooth masses of her well-dressed hair, and the neat way she gathered up her skirts over her little high-heeled boots confirmed me in my conclusions as to her nationality.

Meanwhile, as she tripped briskly down the platform, I reminded myself with a certain lightening of spirit of my obligations to Augusta, and a few minutes later found us both seated in the opposite corners of a through carriage for the little country station.

It was even with a certain anxiety that I frowned at possible intruders, and we were just about to start when a frantic porter, dragging an unwilling spaniel by a leash, came panting up the platform.

The dog was thrust into the van adjoining, none too gently, I fear, as a yelp rang out before the door was slammed, followed by a low and mournful howl. As the train puffed out I glanced at my pretty companion.

Her pliant face showed a ready sympathy.

"Oh, le pauvre!" she murmured softly, as a second mournful note rose and quivered and died away.

Here was my opportunity.

"I'm always sorry for poor dumb animals," I began, somewhat lamely, but the lady broke in with a mischievous smile.

"Dumb?" she queried, with the prettiest little accent in the world. "O—ough!" went the spaniel next door, and we both laughed aloud.

A cold autumn wind blew in at the open window, and, seeing her hand on the cash, I rose to her assistance.

"Merci, monsieur!" said my companion. "We will shut out so 'owls!"

"We may as well be warm," I said, stifling a smile. "It is a long journey to Wryborough."

"Tiens! Monsieur goes there, too?" She raised her finely arched brows, evidently in ignorance of Augusta's ninth-hour decision.

Then a happy thought struck me, I would keep the fact of my destination secret up to the last moment, and only when we had both arrived at Wryborough Court should she know I was one of the house party for the week end.

"I am going down for the shooting," I said vaguely.

She nodded her head wisely. "I saw monsieur had his gun. Will it be for birds now or for foxes?"

Luckily for me, the spunkiest thing in again stifled my involuntary gasp.

"We don't shoot foxes in this country," I began, and promptly kicked myself for being pedantic when I saw the hurt expression on Diane's pretty face; "but we hunt them," I added swiftly.

"Enfin!" She shrugged her shoulders slightly. "It does come to me same, n'est ce pas?—zey die!"

She looked out at the bare trees and autumn gloom, and gave a little shiver as she continued:

"For my sake, I would prefer to be shot. I do not like to imagine myself, for instance, to be ate by dogs! It is your favorite picture here—ze 'sport print,' is it not, monsieur? In ze air ze poor fox upside down, and below ze dogs in rows, most fierce and 'ungry. Mon Dieu, I pity 'im!"

I felt at all costs the subject must be dropped.

"We don't hunt much at Wryborough," I said evasively. "We've no pack near enough."

The name of the place changed the current of her thoughts.

"Perhaps you know ze Court, where I go to stay with Mrs. Stanfield Fane and family? You have an acquaintance wiv them, monsieur?"

"I have known them for years," I said carelessly. "It's a pretty place—a typical English country house."

She watched me a little anxiously, I thought.

"An' ze children—you know zem?" she hazarded, at last.

"Of course," I answered, somewhat bewildered. "Regular little demons they are, too!"

A horrified look swept over her face.

"I do not understand," she murmured. "Demons? Zat is devils, is it not? But monsieur jests!"—as I laughed aloud.

"Monkeys," I amended. "What you call 'petits gamins' in your charming country."

I was rewarded by her smile of acknowledgement.

"I was only thinking of the tricks they played the last time I was there with poor old Fraulein, the German governess. Would it amuse you to hear the story?"

"But yes!" said Diane, eagerly.

She leaned forward to catch my words above the increasing rattle of the train, and I moved across so as to pour the harrowing story into her ear. The fast fading light from the window outlined her pretty profile, but threw her face into shadow, so that I could not judge of its expression; and as I came to the crisis of the children's practical joke we rattled down an incline into a deep cutting between high banks.

"I wonder the fright didn't kill her," I wound up cheerfully, "but it takes a lot to kill a German governess."

To my horror, by way of response I caught a stifled sob.

"Oh, it was cruel, cruel!" came a despairing voice. "Mon Dieu, what impossible children—barbaric—without hearts!"

"Good gracious!" I ejaculated. "I'm awfully sorry! I'd be idea you'd take it that way! They shan't play tricks on you, I promise you that!"

In the gloom I saw that she turned her face aside and her handkerchief went up stealthily to her eyes.

"Why, I'm staying in the house!" I assured her eagerly. "I wasn't going to tell you, just for the joke, but as it is, I'll see you through. The children shan't worry you."

"You are most good, came a stifled voice, "and it is foolish, indeed, to be upset; but ze long journey—and England is so strange!"

Her poor little apology touched me to the heart, and involuntarily I laid my hand over hers.

"Do forgive me!" I entreated. "It was all my silly fault!"

She turned to me with a dawning smile on her still quivering lips; her large brown eyes with the tired shadows beneath met my own in a grateful silence, and at that precise moment the train gave a loud whistle and darted into a tunnel, leaving us in total darkness.

A faint scream came from my pretty companion.

"Quel horreur!" I heard her say in a strangled voice, and the hand to mine clutched me with nervous force.

"It's not a long one!" I shouted, reassuringly, above the roar of the

train's passage, leaning a little toward her.

Bump, went the carriage over the uneven rails, and the softest cheek in the world came up against my own!

I vow it was not my fault, but just a combination of circumstances too strong to withstand.

But, as it was, the train popped out as inconsiderately as it had dashed into that confounded tunnel, and there was Diane's glossy head comfortably popped against my shoulder and my arm firmly planted round that neat French waist!

The sunshine blinked at us impudently from behind a heavy cloud and the sudden glare completed my confusion, but my little companion, with native grace, swiftly extricated herself from what we both, I think, felt to be a false situation.

She rose quickly to her feet and straightened her tumbled hair in the dingy mirror opposite.

"Monsieur must excuse . . ." she said, rapidly, with carefully averted face. "It is not often that I find myself to faint!—but a tunnel—with no lamp—impossible to figure to another the suffocation it produces!"

Her hands went up to her slender throat with true dramatic effect—the clever little woman! My admiration for her rose by leaps and bounds.

And suddenly the picture of Augusta's face had she but peeped in upon us and realized the result of her telegraphic precipitation flashed before my mental vision.

Our eyes met, as Diane turned away from the glass; at first shyly, then with a gathering sense of mischief, and I could not resist the impulse.

"I was thinking of Augusta," I answered the challenge of those arched eyebrows. "She asked me to look after you coming down, you know!"

But a look of bewilderment came into her expressive eyes.

"Augusta? I do not understand."

"My cousin, of course, Mrs. Fane." It was my turn to be puzzled now, for the lady gave a little inarticulate cry, and turned to me, her hands clasped together, her face despairing.

"She must nevaire know," she stammered. "I did not imagine to myself that monsieur was of the 'ouais! Mon Dieu! It would be wiser that we are not acquainted."

She broke off with a shrug of her shoulders, and sat down in the far corner of the carriage.

"Enfin," she concluded, "monsieur understands—we 'ave not met."

The sudden change nettled me. Why, too, this desperate fear of Augusta? Surely she could not believe that I would be guilty of gossiping!

"I am afraid I can hardly agree to that," I said, in a voice as frigid as her own, "seeing that I was asked, as I mentioned before, to travel down with you."

Her pretty face grew pink.

"Monsieur must forgive me—but I cannot understand!"

I dived into my pocket, and, producing the crumpled telegram, I handed it across silently and at arm's length.

She took it with a little deprecatory smile, and read it slowly through aloud.

"Diane coming by 3.30 train; please bring her down, Augusta."

"You see"—I began, triumphantly; but at this moment the train drew up at Clipstone Junction, and a friendly station master broke in upon our tete-a-tete.

"You're all right for Wryborough, sir! It's the alp carriage. 'Ope you're quite well, sir. Right away there!" He waved his arm vigorously, and we were off again, grunting and jerking down the steep incline.

"An' who is Diane?" said my companion, thoughtfully.

I gave a violent start.

"Why—do you mean to say—you? Aren't you Diane?" I shouted in my excitement.

"Mais non! Monsieur," came the demure voice, "I am Julie—Julie Angélique Danton, zat is my name. I do not understand."

Again that maddening reiteration. "Pon my soul, I don't either!" I said in my annoyance, but at the sound of my voice mademoiselle drew herself up stiffly.

"I am sorry—it is evident monsieur 'as made a mistake—" she looked at me indignantly, "several mistakes," she amended, with cool precision.

I felt I had deserved it, but the situation was desperate.

"I beg your pardon," I said hurriedly; "please don't misunderstand me. I'm so awfully worried over that wire. Don't you see—I leaned forward confidentially—I'm delighted to have met you, of course, but if you aren't Diane, where is she?—and what shall I say to Augusta?"

For a moment she struggled for composure, and then she laughed aloud.

"I cannot 'elp it," she cried. "It is so funny! And monsieur's face. Mon Dieu! it is like a play!"

I joined in wrathfully.

"It's all very well for you," I said as the carriage slowly slackened speed, "but here we are at Wryborough, and where the dickens is Diane?"

The door opened, and I helped my

companion to alight, with a quick glance down the empty platform.

Thank goodness Augusta had not come to meet us! But I congratulated myself too soon, for, as I turned to the van for my luggage, a sound of wheels fell on my ears and I saw across the low hedge my cousin's wife effect and massive in the phaeton, driving up at full speed.

At the moment the door of the van swung back, and the first "luggage" to alight was the spaniel, straining at his leash, bounding and curvetting with joy at his release.

The solitary porter, holding him, turned to me in his trouble.

"If you don't mind taking the dawg, sir," he suggested, "I'll 'ave the portmanteau out in a minute."

I was quieting the half frantic animal when Augusta appeared on the scene.

"How are you?" she said, heartily. "I'm afraid I'm late, but one of those hateful traction engines was crawling up the lane before us, and there wasn't room to pass. You've brought Diane, I see. That's capital!"

I looked at her in speechless amazement, but luckily her attention was riveted on the dog.

"Poor old girl—there—there!" She fondled the glossy coat. "Diddums! hate its nasty journey then? Poor girly, poor old Diane!"

She raised her head a moment as a neat figure passed us with carefully averted face, guided by the tall footman with obvious condescension to the distant cab.

"There goes the new governess," said Augusta, cheerfully; "an improvement on old Fraulein, isn't she, Dick? But you must be famished, so come along—only I'm such a baby over old Diane."

She took the leash from me and moved forward. "I am glad you found her! I was so afraid you'd get the wire, and not the letter, and wonder, whatever I meant, and I simply couldn't bear the idea of her coming down from the vet, all by her lonesome in a nasty van—eh, Diane?"

I murmured something incoherent as I helped my cousin's wife into the phaeton.

Diane settled herself comfortably between my knees, and as Augusta gathered up the reins into her capable hands she gave me a little nod of approval.

"I see you've made great friends already," she commented, "you and Diane!"

I resisted a rising desire to laugh, and answered her gravely.

"Friendship isn't the word for it," I said.—Black and White.

A MURDER CASE.

A Dead Overcoat Brings Out the Reserves.

"Murder, sure!" whispered a First precinct patrolman a few nights ago. His nose was flat against the window of a photographer's shop up on F street. Dimly visible within the shop were evidences of what appeared to be a grim midnight tragedy. But now the drinks are on the patrolman.

The Sherlock of the First precinct straightway "gum-shoed" it for the most contiguous patrol box, and no large amount of spring timothy found time to sprout beneath his goshaws before he had got a reserve squad under the command of the sergeant at the scene. Then, in the department's best style, they advanced upon the place of horror.

To the nude optic it surely looked as though their actions were about to be justified, for within the back room of the tintype emporium, dimly lighted by a night lamp and lying surrounded by a riot of overturned pictures and frames and paraphernalia, appeared a huddled heap of black.

"It's a woman—and she's dead!" the sergeant whispered. "Surround the place before I rouse the parlious."

When the squad had deployed the sergeant began a tattoo on the door which sounded like Salvation Army night in Market space. Five minutes later a bleary-eyed photographer person was aroused from his sleep, and, turtle-like, stuck his head from one of the upper windows.

"What's matter?" he demanded.

"House pinched?"

"Come down here and open up!" the policeman shouted. There's been murder gone."

"Wow!" the owner of the head vouchsafed. The head disappeared, and soon the street door was opened to the waiting policemen. With drawn guns they advanced on the heap of black in the back room, peering into corners for any possible Dorsey Foults who might be lurking there.

The sergeant bent over the huddled heap of black and straightened, with a foolish grin on his face.

"'Taint nethin' but an overcoat," he said.

"My overcoat," supplemented the bleary-eyed photographer person. "Queez I had a little too much to drink," he continued, "and when I came in tonight I threw my overcoat down after I had stumbled over more picture frames than I ever dreamed were in my boss's shop."—Washington Star.

The Spanish senile has adopted the bill dealing with the reorganization of the navy.

THERE WITH THE FRONT.

No matter how harshly the Fates treated Bill—

He was there with the front—
When his pockets were empty, his stomach fast—

He was there with the front.
When he hadn't a cent in his wide world to spend—
When his finish loomed up with an indigo blend—

When he went out to "touch" forty bones from a friend—

He was there with the front.

His wife ran away with the coachman one day—
But he still kept his front.
He owed everybody with nothing to pay—
But he still kept his front.

In spite of his troubles and outlook so dim—
By George—all the people began trusting
Pretty soon he was there in the thick of the swim—
On account of that front.

When Bill came to die—and he knew it was there with the front.
He had made it a part of his nature, you know—
This having a front.

Now, Bill wasn't a saint by an awful long shot—
But arriving UP THERE where the angels allot
I'll bet everything in the world I have got
He got in on his front.

—Granddaddy Rice, in Nashville Tennessean.

WIT HUMOR AND SARCASM

"She jilted me!" "Congratulations!"

"Sir!" "Don't get angry, I married her."—Cleveland Leader.

"You say that the cook assaulted you?" Inquired the judge. "He did—kicked me, your Honor." "Where did he kick you?" "In the pantry."—Judge.

It was rush hour in the subway. Martin Luther hung wearily from a strap. "Here stand I," he said. "God help me, I can do no otherwise."—Judge.

"What I am after," declared the spoils-party candidate, "is not so much causes as effects." "Whose effects?" shouted a man in the crowd.—Baltimore American.

Sunday school teacher—If your enemy should smile you on one cheek, what would you do? Tommy Tuffnut—Dat would depend on how big he was.—Philadelphia Record.

"Why is it?" asked the dear girl, "that the bridegroom's attendant is called the 'best man'?" "I suppose it's because he is the best off," growled the fussy old bachelor.—Chicago Daily News.

"Don't you consider it honorable to tell a man his faults to his face?" queried the youth. "Yes," replied the wise guy, "but I consider it safer to tell them to his neighbor."—Chicago Daily News.

"Can you tell your present fiance's ring?" Inquired the romantic girl as the doorbell sounded. "Why, certainly," answered her practical friend. "It's the newest of the lot."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"I wonder," said the facetious operative tenor, "if I would come under the proposed dog ordinance?" "Why?" asked his friend. "Because my chief part in the new opera is a barksy-role."—Baltimore American.

"You take me too seriously," protested the muckraker convicted of libel, "acting as though people were expected to believe my stuff." Really there did seem to be merit in the plea, but it came too late.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

"Well, where's that cook?" demanded his wife. "Don't tell me she wasn't on the train." "She was on the train," timidly explained the commuter, "but I got to playing cards and a Lonelyville man won her at whist."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"I did think," said Cholly Snobberly, "of going in for politics, but I was afraid I wouldn't know just how to treat my inferiors, don't y' know." "Your inferiors?" remarked Sharpe. "Of you wouldn't be likely to meet any of them."—Philadelphia Press.

Goodley—They're in reduced circumstances, of course, but their family is a very old one and proud, even if they have lots of debts. They date back to the earliest colonial times.—Cutting—The debts, you mean? I don't doubt that.—Philadelphia Press.

"Bixby is the man who invented a luminous keyhole." "Yes." "It was a failure. Bixby came home from the club at two o'clock in the morning, confident that he would have no trouble in finding the proper place to insert his latekey. And, lo! when he looked for the luminous keyhole he saw a whole galaxy of them."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Test of an Egg.

Some folks who were going on a picnic got one raw egg mixed up with the cold boiled ones and did not know how to detect it without breaking them all.

A visitor was equal to the emergency. According to St. Nicholas, he took an egg between his fingers and his thumb, he twisted it on the table and it spun like a top.

"That egg," said he, "has been boiled." Another was tried with the same result, and then he found one that he could not make spin.

"That," said he, "is the raw egg." And so the puzzle was solved.